ing articles of the law enacted a system of trade control whereby, to all appearance, the evasion of either the letter or the spirit of the statute was made impossible. Yet for a time the disintegration of the public powers under the Directory was such that, in spite of the exasperation of the national hatred against the English government, the law was simply ignored. On December fourth, 1798, however, there was a sudden change; without warning, strong military detachments were placed at all the gates of Paris and every vehicle was carefully searched; domiciliary visits were commenced by the customs authorities and were continued until all English wares were removed from commerce; and French public opinion supported these proceedings, which the English stigmatized as "legal robbery."

The fact was that Napoleon Bonaparte had temporarily taken up the task of administration, and, having correctly read the public temper, was beginning the policy of "thorough." The treaty of Campo Formio had been concluded; and, though he was only com-mander-in-chief of the French army — and that by construction rather than in form — he was really the arbiter of the government. Whatever the masses thought, the Directory knew that the fate of France was in his hands; and nothing confirmed that opinion more strongly than the ease with which the law enacted two years before was now enforced. Haying made what he considered easy terms with Austria, he had determined to destroy the credit of Pitt's government by attacking English industries and commerce, and to defy, if necessary, the neutral carriers of the world. It appears to have been at this time that his mind formed the "Chimera," as a French historian calls it, which in the end proved his ruin — the conception that, if only the conservative administration of Great Britain could